



WINTER 2024

Fireside

A magazine for alumni and friends of Brownell Talbot College Preparatory School

Building Together



BT Unveils
Cutting-Edge Website
more on page 5

Building Together:
Campus Transformation
more on page 9

160 Years of Excellence
in Education
more on page 13



Notes from Worthington Hall

Dear BT Community,

As we celebrate 160 years of educational excellence in this issue (see pages 13-14), I am thrilled to share exciting progress on our historic campus coinciding with this milestone year.

We recently unveiled a new brownell.edu that redefines how visitors interact with the school online (see pages 5-6). It is difficult to capture the wow factor of the new brownell.edu by reading an article about it, so I encourage you to also visit us online to check it out.

And the most exciting news, we are transforming our campus to empower inspired teaching and learning for decades to come. This summer, we will break ground on a new atrium, Lower and Middle School gymnasium, and Lower School educational wing featuring world-class flexible classroom design and vibrant collaboration spaces tailored to our students' needs. The new construction thoughtfully blends into

existing architecture and bolsters capacity, representing our commitment to the next generation of students.

While campus spaces may evolve, our mission endures - to know, inspire, and challenge every student's mind and heart. This is an exciting era for our school community, and I look forward to keeping you apprised as the campus transformation unfolds and sharing how you can be a part of supporting this project.

As always, thank you for being part of the Brownell Talbot community.

Sincerely,

Kristi N. Gibbs

Kristi N. Gibbs, Ed.D.
Head of School

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Fireside is published for alumni, families, and friends of Brownell Talbot College Preparatory School. Send story ideas and comments to Brownell Talbot

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WHAT'S HAPPENING — ON CAMPUS? —

BT Named Best in Omaha and Nebraska!

BT has once again been recognized as Nebraska's premier educational institution by Best of Omaha and Niche.com!

- First place in the Best of Omaha category for best private high school.
- First place in the Best of Omaha category for best private elementary school - an incredible seven-year streak!
- First place in Niche.com's ranking for best private high school in Nebraska - for the fourth consecutive year.
- First place in Niche.com's category for best private K-12 school in Nebraska - for the third consecutive year.
- First place in Niche.com's ranking for best high schools for STEM in Nebraska - for the third consecutive year.
- First place in Niche.com's category for best private college prep schools in Nebraska.

Thank you for your support and enthusiasm for BT, which have been instrumental in our earning many accolades this year!



7 YEARS IN A ROW!



3 YEARS IN A ROW!



3 YEARS IN A ROW!



3 YEARS IN A ROW!



3 YEARS IN A ROW!



1. November Food Drive Results in Big Donation

As a school, BT collected over 3,000 items, or more than one ton of food for Completely Kids during the National Honor Society's November food drive. Donated items will be used to pack take-home meals for children, as well as prepare meals on-site for those students who visit Completely Kids after school.

2. BT Featured in Net Assets Magazine

Head of School Kristi N. Gibbs, Ed.D. was interviewed for the November/December 2023 issue of *Net Assets* magazine regarding the success of BT's Upper School tuition reset in 2020.

3. Schinzel Sets Record for Most Career Passing Yards

John Schinzel, '26, set the record for most passing yards in a career for eight-man football at BT. The previous record was set by Derek Witt, '98. John's record of 2,171 yards surpasses Witt's record by eight yards.

4. Varsity Volleyball Participates in SheMate Mentoring Program

SheMate connects high school students with their nationwide community of college, professional, Olympic, and Paralympic women athletes for virtual mentoring and wellness groups. BT's volleyball team completed



the five-week program, speaking with student athletes from Georgetown, Vanderbilt, Texas Tech, Ohio State, West Virginia, Columbia, Providence, Missouri, Elon, Wisconsin, and the Paralympics about self-talk, balancing responsibilities, handling pressure, and preparing for life after high school.

5. Third Grade Flag Football Wins League Championship

BT's third grade flag football team had a win-loss record of 4-2 for the season and ultimately won the Suburban League Championship with a score of 12-8.

6. Lanum Places at State Cross Country

Corbett Lanum, '26, placed seventh overall at the D-1 District Cross Country Invite, qualifying her for the state championship. At state, Lanum placed 22nd and beat her seeded time.

7. Students Attend Nebraska Ambassador Forum

In October, BT's Upper School American History class attended the Nebraska Ambassador Forum hosted at University of Nebraska Medical Center. The distinguished panel featured Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann, renowned for his service in

Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan, as well as Ambassador Dawn M. Liberi, who represented the U.S. in Burundi. Ambassador J. Peter Pham, former U.S. Special Envoy for the Sahel Region of Africa, and the Honorable Alonzo L. Fulgham, who served as Acting Administrator of USAID, also participated.

8. Fourth Grade Runs Concessions Stand

BT's fourth graders are learning the ropes of running Booster Club's concessions stand. Fourth grade math teacher Cassie Grant arranged for this partnership with Booster Club in order to give students opportunities to apply their math skills in real-world situations while also actively contributing to our school community!

9. Eighth Grade Class Gift Promotes Cross Divisional Play

Last year the Class of 2027 gifted the game 9-Square in the Air to BT. The game was a huge hit this fall, encouraging students from all divisions, as well as faculty, staff, and administrators to take up the game and enjoy some friendly competition.

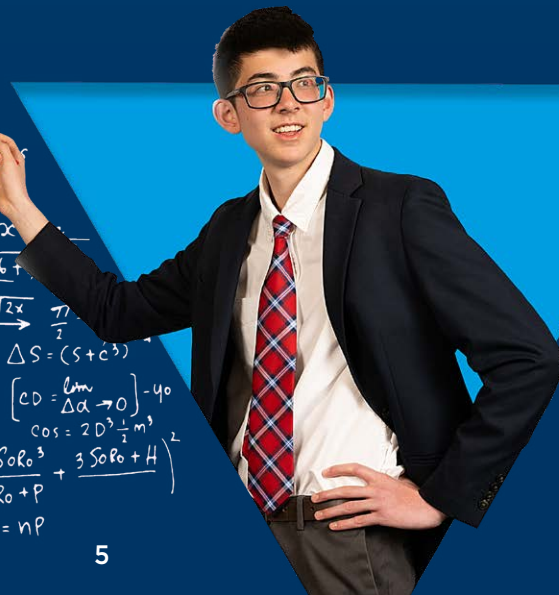
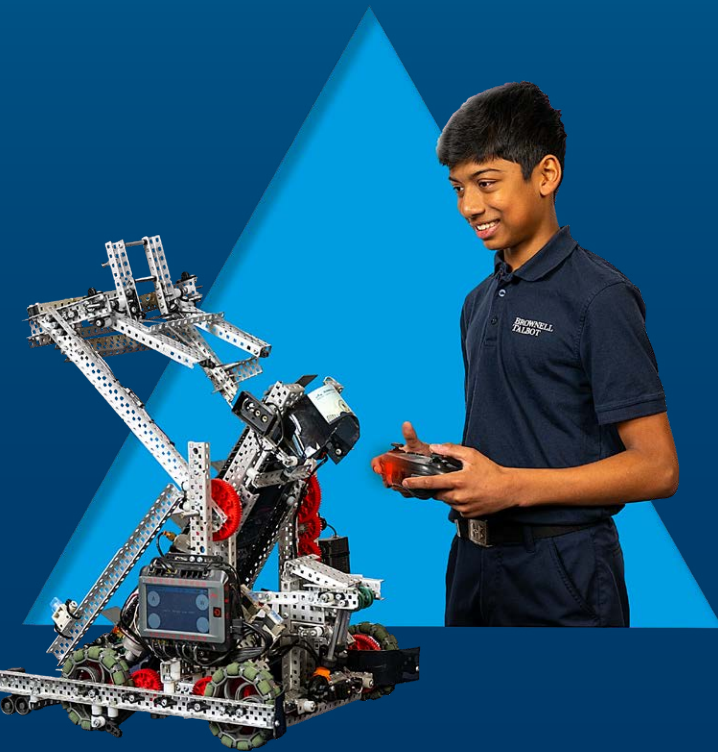
REDEFINING LIMITS TOGETHER

BT Unveils Cutting-Edge Website

In an era where digital landscapes shape our first impressions, Brownell Talbot proudly forged into new digital territory this August with the launch of the reinvented brownell.edu. This ground-up website rebuild goes beyond surface-level sparkle, instead redefining limits on how visitors interact with the school online. By focusing on visual storytelling and intuitive navigation mapped to audience needs, the new brownell.edu forges authentic first impressions and intuitive connections.

At the heart of this transformation is the school's new slogan, "Redefining Limits, Together," reflecting BT's commitment to boundless learning and collaboration to inspire and challenge future leaders and change makers. The redesigned website serves as the online manifestation of this ethos, providing a dynamic platform that mirrors the excellence and innovation synonymous with BT.

With enrollment at an all-time high, the need for an intuitive, information-rich online space has never been more pressing. Prospective students,



alumni, and current families alike can now navigate the digital landscape of brownell.edu with unparalleled ease, thanks to the site's user-friendly design.

Central to the website's functionality are audience-specific pages tailored to the unique needs of alumni, current families, and faculty and staff. This ensures that each visitor can swiftly access the information most relevant to them, fostering a sense of belonging and engagement within the broader community.

The launch of this innovative website not only marks a milestone in its online presence but also exemplifies Brownell Talbot's dedication to cultivating a community of learners who are driven to break down barriers and connect with others on a global level.

WEBSITE FEATURES

- For alumni, the website serves as a virtual homecoming, offering information about upcoming events and opportunities to reconnect with the alma mater.
- Current families will find a treasure trove of resources, from student celebrations to extracurricular activity details, streamlining their interaction with the school.
- The website's responsive design ensures a seamless experience across various devices, reflecting the school's commitment to accessibility.
- When viewing the homepage on a desktop computer, users will be greeted by one-of-kind animations, demonstrating the connectedness of our students as they take risks, explore new opportunities, and collaborate with peers to shape their future together.



Check out the new *brownell.edu*!

Bringing Service Learning to Life at Brownell Talbot



This year, Brownell Talbot is reimagining service learning to catalyze deeper community connections and empower students as advocates for their community. While service has long been a BT priority, new approaches are strengthening outcomes for partners, participants, and the causes served.

Led by Dean of Students Meg Harms, faculty now implement a rigorous IPARDE cycle when designing projects - spanning intentional Inventory and Investigation before Action, then ensuring quality Reflection, Demonstration and Evaluation afterwards. This thoughtful scaffolding promotes meaningful experiences beyond simple volunteerism.

Upper School Houses engaged in activities like skill mapping and passion project speed dating to align service initiatives to student strengths

and interests. By considering their own talents and learning objectives first, participants can now better apply their gifts to community needs.

Take Hitchcock House, who partnered once more with Metro Community College's 180 Re-entry Assistance Program for the formerly incarcerated. But this year, equipped with new tools, students deepened the reciprocal impact. Attending re-entry meetings and directly engaging with program members granted vulnerable insights into the reintegration journey.

Cameron Vakili-Zadeh, '27, reflected on playing UNO with program participants and realizing the humanity beneath stereotypes, saying the service learning project introduced him to "some of the nicest people I've met. It was a very impactful experience. Meeting people from different perspectives than you is always a good thing."

Hitchcock will return later this spring during their second Service Learning day to tour the facility and gain a richer understanding of daily life after prison.

A key tenet of BT's Portrait of a Graduate calls for ethical citizens influencing humanity - beginning locally. Through reimagined service learning, students gain confidence to advocate for needs beyond themselves. BT nurtures this progression thoughtfully, ensuring growth for its students and communities alike.



BACKSTAGE BRILLIANCE:

Finding a Passion for Theatre Tech

In second grade, Ally Newman, '24, and their mom went to see *Disney On Ice* and was mesmerized. But not by the skaters. Ally's attention was intensely focused on the people they could see moving about in the shadows.

"I asked my mom who they were," Ally said. "She had theatre tech friends in college and was able to explain the role of the tech crew. I immediately wanted to be one of them."

In 2019, when Ally began attending BT, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically limited options for participating in theatre. So Ally began looking for opportunities outside of school. Age restrictions limited where Ally could work, but eventually they found PACE (Pottawattamie Arts Culture Entertainment) who partnered with Chanticleer Community Theatre and Ally joined the tech crew for their performance of *The Music Man*.

In many ways, Ally is a typical senior. They have homework that they work on in between classes and late at night, they participate in BT theatre and on the Science Olympiad team, and they spend hours imagining what next year will hold and how it will serve as a building block to their future.

In other ways, they are very unique. For the past two years, Ally has been an apprentice at Omaha Community Playhouse, often starting their day with classes at BT, heading to the playhouse in the afternoon, where they often work until 10:00 pm. They have also been taking classes at Metro Community College and, by August 2024, will have completed their associate's degree in applied science for theater tech.

Ally found avenues outside of school to pursue technical theatre, while BT administrators found unique ways to offer programming that would support their passion. Even when enrollment was low, BT offered Technical Theatre so they could explore this interest on campus. That foundation, plus accessing additional programs beyond school, empowered Ally to excel in areas they love.

"BT helped me realize this is a viable career path and has helped me leverage my experience in advocating for new opportunities," Ally explained.

Ally was the first student to run the soundboard for an entire show at BT and has explored other aspects of working behind the scenes such as props through BT's programming.

"BT has exposed me to many different paths my tech career could take and has been supportive in helping me realize my goals."

In addition to supporting Ally in class, BT has worked hard to support their passion *off* campus as well. For example, Dean of Students Meg Harms worked with Ally and their family to ensure their BT classes were in the mornings, so that they could be at Omaha Community Playhouse in the afternoons for their apprenticeship.

When asked what advice they would give other students looking to follow the same path, Ally offered, "Don't let people convince you into the spotlight. It's okay to be backstage. The show can't run without you."

Ally's Vision Board

What was your favorite show to work on at BT?

Disney's Descendants (fall 2022) - It was the first musical for which I ran the soundboard.

What was your favorite non-BT production to work on?

A Christmas Carol at Omaha Community Playhouse. I worked with adults who have day jobs and still love theatre and continue to do it in their spare time. I also met people who signed on for some extra money and found along the way that they love doing theatre.

What is your dream show to work on someday?

Any Broadway show ON Broadway.

What is your favorite show you've seen?

Love Never Dies - it was the first show that made me want to pursue theatre tech as a career.

Building BROWNELL TALBOT Together

A world-class education deserves world-class spaces.

That belief is at the core of BT's forward-thinking campus master plan, officially adopted and shared with the entire BT community in January 2021. Developed with input from students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters, the plan established a deeply researched, comprehensive vision for the future of BT's campus — one that would set the standard for learning environments and position all current and future BT students to thrive and lead in a rapidly changing world.

The time to build that future is here.

Thanks to foundational donations supporting the BT campus plan, including visionary gifts from Debbie and Brian Wood, BT legacy families, the Board of Trustees, and the BT Foundation Board, the school will break ground this summer on a transformational project. Highlights include a fully redesigned Lower School, a new Lower and Middle School gym, vibrant community spaces, and major facilities improvements.

BUILDING PROGRESS

PROJECT TIMELINE

June 2024:

Lower School demolition begins

August 2024 - December 2025:

Campus transformation

Spring 2026:

Anticipated project completion

Find more project details, FAQs, and updates at brownell.edu/buildingtogether.

FOCUS AREAS

EAST CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION

Replacing the current Lower School building will be a new state-of-the-art, 50,000 sq. ft. wing for Early Years and Lower School classrooms.

This dynamic, connective addition will also facilitate a new central entrance, as well as floor plans that are more conducive to the range of scholastic and extracurricular activities taking place on campus.

SYSTEMS & INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Major improvements will include advanced classroom technologies, much-needed mechanical upgrades, enhanced airflow and air exchange systems, and telecommunications infrastructure to support learning. As ever, safety and security will be at the forefront of all campus improvements.

COMMUNITY SPACES

A new main entrance and atrium, reimagined dining hall, and new Lower School and Middle School gym will infuse campus life with vibrant and flexible spaces for gatherings, performances, athletic offerings, competitions, project-based learning opportunities, and more.

"This monumental project is a reflection of our community's inspiring and enduring commitment to our students, informed by a forward-thinking campus master plan, to ensure that BT's goals for a world-class education are appropriately matched with world-class facilities," said Head of School Kristi Gibbs, Ed.D.

View looking north toward a new main entrance and Lower and Middle School gymnasium.



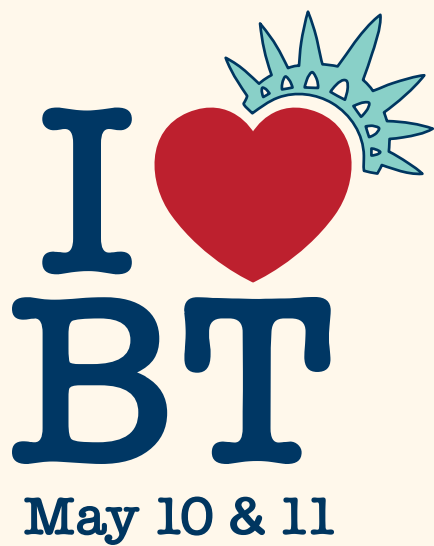
The forthcoming Debbie and Brian Wood Atrium.



A corridor and collaborative space in the new Lower School building.



Renderings courtesy of
Alley Poyner Macchietto
Architecture.



HONORARY CHAIRS

Lori and David, '81, Scott

GALA CHAIRS

Rhonda and Jeff Bishop
Valerie and Casey Garrigan

STEERING COMMITTEE

Advertising

Ashley DuBois

Decorations

Kaleena Biggerstaff, Patra Pakieser, and
Casie Schlueter

Display

Natalia Atchley

Exceptional Events

Annie Linberg, '04, and Shivani Sharma, '04

Family Baskets

Marion Dawber, Bridget Hamill, and Katie Wudel

Live Auction

Emily and Troy Holm and Jamie Ryan

Mailings & Promotions

Angela Shull and Lea Thomas

Patron Party

Megan Belcher, Laura Crosby, and Debbie Wood

Raffle

Angeline and Peter Larson and
Jolene Loetscher and Nate Burdine

Silent Auction

Sheila Christ-Vakili and Erin Strunk

Sponsorships & Underwriting

Arinna Roxas and Karla Loya Stack

Student Projects

Annie Daugherty

Brownell Talbot Gala 2024

Drawing inspiration from the iconic “I ♥ New York” advertising campaign, the gala 2024 theme is a symbol of love and appreciation for the pursuit of knowledge and educational excellence. Similar to the original campaign’s intent to cultivate a sense of unity among New Yorkers, I Love BT celebrates the shared experience of the Brownell Talbot community.

As echoed in the spirit of “I ♥ New York,” the heart symbol in I ♥ BT becomes a symbol of love and appreciation for the transformative power of a Brownell Talbot education. BT is a place that fosters an environment to prepare students to accomplish anything they set out to do. This year’s gala theme is a tribute to everyone in the BT community and their contributions to creating a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages students to take risks, explore new opportunities, and collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

I ♥ BT will welcome guests to a two-day gala event: a New York-chic soirée on Friday, May 10 at the Cottonwood Hotel and an adults-only carnival on Saturday, May 11 at Brownell Talbot. A two-day gala weekend ensures every member of the BT community has the opportunity to attend, participate, and support the school in a memorable and meaningful way. Guided by the leadership of chairs Rhonda and Jeff Bishop (parents to Reider, '30, and Hudson, '31) and Valerie and Casey Garrigan (parents to Liam, '25, Aiden, '27, and Declan, '30), as well as a robust steering committee made up of dedicated parent volunteers, planning is underway for what is sure to be an extraordinary gala weekend!

Brownell Talbot will proudly recognize Lori and David, '81, Scott as this year’s Gala Honorary Chairs. The Scott family has a long and impactful history at Brownell Talbot. From David’s years as a BT student, throughout their children’s school years (Madison, '18, Kaitlyn, '21, and Dylan, '23), and beyond, the Scott family are passionate and consistent supporters of the school, always looking for ways to support and celebrate BT’s faculty and staff as well as programs and initiatives that set the bar for educational excellence. Through countless volunteer roles, numerous leadership positions, and endless years of support, the Scotts are a true example of what it means to be “all in for BT.” ♥

How Does Your Support Make a Difference at BT?

The BT Fund is Brownell Tallbot's annual giving program, the school's most important fundraising effort. The BT Fund gives Brownell Talbot the tools to fulfill our highest aspirations and flexibility to meet the needs of our students. In short, The BT Fund strengthens every facet of our school - beyond what is possible with tuition alone. Gifts to The BT Fund are a vital component in the financial health of the school.



The Gap

The BT Fund bridges the gap between tuition and the cost to educate each child. The gap at BT is \$3,500 per student.

Because of The BT Fund, the school is empowered to:

- Attract and retain talented, world class faculty and staff.
- Expand health and wellness resources to be responsive to the diverse and changing needs of all our students.
- Offer student programming in the areas of world language, visual arts, vocal and instrumental music, and drama.
- Create opportunities in athletics and activities for students at all levels.
- Empower students through an engaging curriculum to become responsible and engaged global citizens capable of positively impacting the world.



How do YOU fit in?

We invite you to join us as we celebrate our school's unique community by participating in The BT Fund. Your gift has a direct and lasting impact on our school year and the many opportunities afforded to all BT students. **We simply wouldn't be BT without you.**



Make your 100% tax-deductible gift at brownell.edu/BTfund today!

160 Years of Excellence in Education

BT marked 160 years by achieving record enrollment of 490 students and being recognized as Nebraska's premier educational institution by Best of Omaha and Niche.com (see page 3 for more). Here are some highlights from the past 160 years of BT!



1863

Brownell Hall was founded by the Rt. Rev. Joseph Cruickshank Talbot, D.D., then the Episcopal Bishop of the Northwest. It was first a girls boarding school offering cultural and educational opportunities to the daughters of the pioneers, sparing them the long journey to eastern boarding schools. Bishop Talbot named the school for the Presiding Bishop of Connecticut, Thomas Church Brownell, whose parish provided a large portion of the funds needed to purchase the school's first building and grounds.



1868

Brownell Hall held the first commencement exercise in the State of Nebraska when it conferred diplomas upon Nebraska's first high school graduates.

1870

1880

1890

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

1922

The school relocated to its present site next to Memorial Park in the Happy Hollow and Dundee neighborhood.



1952

The decision was made for Brownell Hall to become coeducational. Boys were enrolled in the Talbot School for Boys, named for the founder of Brownell Hall, Bishop Talbot.



1969

Brownell Talbot became independent of the Episcopal Church.



1963

The school admitted its first freshmen boys and changed its name to Brownell Talbot, taking the names of both bishops responsible for its birth.



**ALUMNI
IN ACTION**

1965

The last boarders left.



1999-2000

Worthington Hall was renovated to include a four-story addition. Swanson Auditorium transformed into a performing arts center to include dressing and makeup rooms, state of the art sound and lighting systems, and seating for more than 300.

2020

COVID-19 caused a global pandemic, forcing schools across the country to move to distance learning, relying heavily on online meetings tools. BT required only two days of “down time” before launching synchronous and asynchronous learning for all students. Students remained in distance learning from mid-March through the end of the school year in May.

1967

The first coed class graduated from Brownell Talbot.

1985

The school opened the James Middle and Upper School Library, Scott Gymnasium, and Batchelder Hall.

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

2020

1988

Dianne K. Desler became the school's first female headmaster, a position she held for 24 years.

2019

BT hosts Nebraska's 10th annual Mission of Mercy event. Roughly 800 volunteers - including most of BT's faculty, staff, and students in grades 10-12 as well as parents, alumni, and friends of BT - worked together to provide free dental care to more than 1,000 uninsured patients in Scott Gymnasium.

2024

BT announces East Campus transformation project (see pages 9-10) aligning the school's world-class education with world-class spaces.



ALUMNI
IN ACTION

BT'S LEGACY

Eva Cohen, '26
(Mike, '87, and
Karen Cohen)

Dylan Witherspoon, '25
(Pat Witherspoon, '79)

Amelia Bell, '25
(Belinda Beavers, '87,
and Shelby Bell)

Charlie Menin, '30
(Robyn Kooper, x'92)

Shaan Saxena, '29
(Shikhar, x'99, and
Kristin Saxena)

Miranda Clark, '29
(David, x'74, and
Kate Clark)

Sai Saxena, '31
(Shikhar, x'99, and
Kristin Saxena)

Kooper Menin, '29
(Robyn Kooper, x'92)

Ella Anderson, '29
(Julie Adams Anderson, '89)

Lia Saxena, '33
(Shikhar, x'99, and
Kristin Saxena)

Isabella Molai, '35
(Annie Linberg, '04,
and Nabil Molai)

Victoria Molai, '33
(Annie Linberg, '04, and
Nabil Molai)

Julia Kroupa, '34
(Mike, '03, and
Molly Kroupa)

Ansel Marsh, '35
(Krystin [Filipi], x'96,
and Joel Marsh)

Fenton Schafer, '35
(Edwin, x'02, and
Kathryn Thompson)

Gustavo Correa, '35
(Christian, '04,
and Lauren Correa)

Leila Iqbal, '35
(Cari [Stinn], '06,
and Zahid Iqbal)

Zayden Pomerleau, '38
(Shivani Sharma, '04,
and Chris Pomerleau)

STUDENTS

Sonu Saxena, '27
(Shikhar, x'99, and
Kristin Saxena)

Leah Hamilton, '28
(Rebecca Hamilton, x'90)

Corbett Lanum, '26
(Nicole [Rossi], '98, and
Wade Lanum)

Ava Witherspoon, '26
(Pat Witherspoon, '79)

Jake Massih, '31
(John, x'98, and
Anne Massih)

Noli Marsh, '28
(Krystin [Filipi], x'96,
and Joel Marsh)

Olivia Bradford, '31
(Erica [Aaron], '97, and
Steffon Bradford)

Ben Lanum, '31
(Nicole [Rossi], '98,
and Wade Lanum)

Addison Hawkins, '27
(Kim, x'98, and Amy Hawkins)

Andrew Massih, '33
(John, x'98, and
Anne Massih)

Isaiah Bradford, '34
(Erica [Aaron], '97, and
Steffon Bradford)

LillyAnna Dingman, '34
(Heidi Venteicher Dingman, '94,
and Richard Dingman)

Kimbo Hawkins, '34
(Kim, x'98, and
Amy Hawkins)

Not pictured:
Khalil Iqbal, '33
(Cari [Stinn], '06, and Zahid Iqbal)
Valentina Sotolongo, '38
(Jorge, '06, and Joanna Sotolongo)

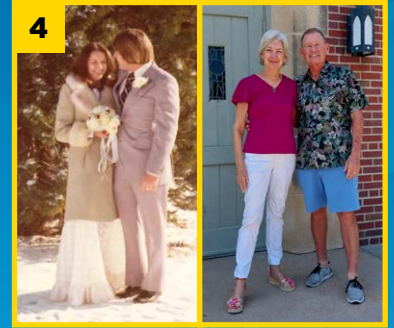
Stella Millard-Jones, '38
(Jennifer Jones, '06,
and Alicia Millard)

Sanaya Pomerleau, '36
(Shivani Sharma, '04,
and Chris Pomerleau)

Alex Kroupa, '37
(Mike, '03, and Molly Kroupa)

ALUMNI
IN ACTION

ALUMNI *on Campus*



1 Emily Wei, '19, visited Omaha recently, meeting up with her high school host parent as well as BT faculty members Amber Straka, Katie Tessin, and Evelyn Navarro. Emily currently lives in St. Louis doing cognitive neuroscience and clinical psychology research at Washington University.

2 Beverly Bedwell, '57, stopped by campus to look at yearbooks and visit the chapel this past summer. While she only attended Brownell Talbot her senior year, she was active with field hockey, basketball, volleyball, the Triangle yearbook, and was class secretary.

3 This year's Alumni and Friends Homecoming Tailgate had record attendance! Pictured are: Tripp Skutt, '14, Paul Harding, '11, Forrest Selvey, '12, Arlie Myers, '14, and Jon White, '08. See page 19 for more pictures and highlights from the event.

4 Retired BT faculty members Patty and Dave Brown came to campus this past summer while in Omaha enjoying an early 50th wedding anniversary celebration. Patty and Dave were married at St. Matthias Chapel on December 29, 1973. When they met at BT, Patty taught Lower School science and Dave taught physical education and coached many sports.

5 Molly Burkley, '12, and Chris Murray were married at St. Matthias Chapel in June.

Joining in the celebration were friends and fellow BT alumni:

Front row: Leigh Gustafson, '12, Molly Burkley Murray, former BT chaplain and past parent Fr. Mark Selvey, Chris Murray, Nicole Chanlatte, '12, and Grace Bartels Seiler, '12

Middle row: Lorenzo Rivera, '13, Julie Rose Zukaitis, x'12, and Jonny Trinh, '12

Back row: Forrest Selvey, '12, Zach Ehresman, '12, Josh Cohen, '12, Haley Mathews, '12, and Saif Shah, '12

6 Emalie Wightman, '20, spent the summer at the U.S. Capitol doing an internship with Senator Deb Fischer. She was able to give members of the Class of 2027 a tour of the Senate offices when they visited Washington, D.C.

7 The Class of 2013 recently gathered for an informal 10-year reunion at a local restaurant! From left to right in the photo: Tiffany Truong, x'13, Christopher Mathews, Dustin Waggoner, JB Davis, Lauren Tims, NK Ibemesi, Cami Oyler (kneeling in front), Lorenzo Rivera, Nathaniel Hallagan, Arielle Bloemer, Lydia Schieuer, Aisha Yapp, and Shannon Elder Bakhit, x'13.

There were a number of alumni events during the first half of the school year. As an alum, you are always welcome to drop by and say hi! Contact the BT team at hello@brownell.edu to schedule a visit!



8 In December US History students in eleventh and twelfth grades visited the Banh Mi Shop in Bellevue, owned by Chloe Tran-Thompson, '14. The trip provided a unique opportunity for students to explore the culinary aspects of Vietnamese culture, deepening their understanding as they have been studying about the Vietnam War.

Students chatted with Chloe, learning about her upbringing in Vietnam, her move to America as a high school junior, and the challenges and successes of starting a business in the Omaha area.

9 Chris Kjeldgård, '18, visited BT's seventh grade class in December, sharing his adventures attending school abroad. He discussed his experiences at James Cook University in Australia, Aarhus Universitet in Denmark, and his current studies in Alaska.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

10 Jorge Sotolongo, '06, with his mother, Dr. Elvira Rios, and spouse, Joanna Sotolongo

11 Shivani Sharma, '04, with her mother-in-law, Marci Pomerleau

12 Jorge Sotolongo, '06, and Joanna Sotolongo, and Jennifer Jones, '06, and spouse Alicia Millard, and parent of BT alumni Ken Lyons

DEI Alumni Panel

As part of the school's steadfast commitment around fostering a welcoming and inclusive community that not only celebrates diversity but also nurtures a profound sense of belonging among all its members, the school's Faculty and Staff DEI Committee invited alumni to participate in a panel discussion for faculty and staff. The purpose of the discussion was to explore strategies to enhance inclusivity within our student body, faculty, and staff.

13 Many thanks to the following alumni for their meaningful insights and participation:

April (Kirkpatrick) Seaman, '70, Charlie Cohen, '19, Abhinav Suresh, '16, Lukmaan Sattar, '17, Jorge Sotolongo, '06, Karoline (Hicks) Haskell, '09, Christian Correa, '04, Dr. Saidah (Yapp) Mayo, '08, Sean Gardner, '19

Hardwood Hustle

14 Over 50 alumni and friends came to the Hardwood Hustle on November 22, 2023!

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS Homecoming Tailgate

This year's Alumni and Friends Homecoming Tailgate welcomed approximately 100 guests, a record number of attendees!

This annual event held prior to the Homecoming football game is a tradition that started 10 years ago at the 150th celebration. Through the years the tailgate has continued to grow and become a favorite event among alumni.

Alumni from all years enjoy bringing their family and friends to connect with classmates and their former teachers.

This annual event is also a wonderful opportunity for classes to gather as part of their reunion celebrations. This year's tailgate welcomed the Class of 2003 for their 20-year reunion. Attendees enjoyed a campus tour before the tailgate, sharing many fond memories of their time at BT. Jeanne Skutt, '00, who was the 2000 homecoming queen, participated in the coronation ceremony for this year's Homecoming queen and king.

Reunions can also be more informal as evidenced by the Class of 2019 who rallied their classmates to meet at the tailgate and enjoy a night out together.



Members of the Class of 2003 at the reunion (from left to right): Mike Kroupa, Nick Eker, Brett Koski, Georgia Haskell, Melissa Goslee, Isha (Dewan) Pandya, Esther (Kuo) Hathaway, Julie (Goslee) Burkhardt, and Sandeep Ayyappan.



Classmates attending the tailgate included (front row): Lillian Cohen, '19, Jade Griffin, '19, Alice Silberling, '19 ; (back row): Kyra George, '20, Kemdi Achigbu, '19, Ashton Reimer, '19, Charlie Cohen, '19, Sy Lim, '19



The tailgate is often a family affair. Joining the festivities this year was the Haskell family, all in town for a family event. Left to right: Parents Neal and Sarah Haskell, and their children Will, '14, Julia, '01, and Georgia, '03. Unable to attend, J.D. Haskell, '08.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

JOEL PASSER, CLASS OF 2005

I currently live in the Boston area and am a neurosurgeon at the Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington, MA. I sub-specialize in the treatment of brain, skull base, and pituitary gland tumors, as well as traumatic brain injury. I've been married to my wife, Sonia, since 2015 and we have two amazing children, Naomi and Eli.

What led you to become a neurosurgeon?

My dad is a physician as well. He honestly was the biggest inspiration for me to get into medicine. I knew from early on that I wanted to go into medicine, but as a surgeon. I majored in neuroscience in college, but didn't really consider neurosurgery as an option until I was directly exposed to it during medical school. Neurosurgery is an exhilarating, but oftentimes humbling, medical specialty. On a daily basis, I meet with patients and their families when they're at the worst, most stressful times in their lives. It is a tremendous responsibility to be given this privilege, as well as the opportunity to relieve pain, restore function, save a life, or simply provide comfort to those in need.

Your family supports The BT Fund every year.

Why do you give back to BT?

Without a doubt, I would not be who I am today without having been at BT from kindergarten through grade 12. BT provided me so many opportunities for me to be my best self. I give back because I want BT to give the same chance to current/future students to be their best selves and be prepared for whatever they choose as a career.

How did BT help prepare you for what you are doing now?

The academic rigors of BT provided me with the foundation for success in college and medical school (including study habits, time management, organization) that allowed me to pursue a career in neurosurgery.

Which BT teachers had the biggest impact on you?

I am forever indebted to all of my former teachers at BT. The Upper School math and science teachers, especially Beth Anderson, Carrie Rise, Jon Mayo, and Patty Brown. All were instrumental in teaching critical thinking and problem solving skills as well as fostering interest in scientific inquiry. I use all of these on a daily basis. The teachers made learning fun and enjoyable, which is a difficult thing to do - I always looked forward to class with them!

What is something you learned in the last week?

I recently met with a patient who has a pituitary gland tumor, which causes a syndrome called Cushing's Disease. This causes a variety of symptoms due to production of excess cortisol (a stress hormone) in the body. She has kept many horses over the years and taught me that while this disease is fairly uncommon in humans, it's very common in horses!



ALUMNI NEWS AND NOTES

The Alumni News and Notes section of *Fireside* celebrates your recent accomplishments and those of your fellow alums. Share your news of births, weddings, career moves, and any life-changing events. We publish alumni submissions and any other news we receive from friends, employers, and media sources.

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

Lois (Noe) Schell, '53, *D. June 21, 2022*

Jonathan Ballenger, x'16, *D. June 30, 2023*

Bruce Kemp, x'17, *D. July 3, 2023*

survived by siblings: twin brother Phil Kemp, x'73, Lawrence Kemp, x'75, Sally (Kemp) Atkinson, x'77, and James Kemp, x'88.

Susanne (Elwood) Houston, '46, *D. July 11, 2023*

Suzanne (Opitz) Wright, '51, *D. August 17, 2023*

Steven Balters, '07, *D. August 31, 2023*

Prudence Walker, '47, *D. October 5, 2023*

FRIENDS

Hormoz Rassekh, D. July 3, 2023

survived by children Christopher Rassekh, x'79, and Aline (Rassekh) Carnahan, '82.

Pat Stricklett, D. July 23, 2023

survived by son Kevin Stricklett, '10.

Colin Dingle, D. July 29, 2023

survived by children Elizabeth, x'88, Pam Dingle, x'90, and Mike Dingle, x'94.

Janet Rath, D. August 1, 2023

survived by son Chris Rath, '91.

Jerome "Jerry" Christensen, D. August 22, 2023,
Brownell Talbot Business Manager from 1995-1997.

Julie Dean Larsen, D. September 11, 2023

survived by daughter Kallie Larsen, '08.

Lois Roskens, D. October 12, 2023

survived by daughter-in-law Lisa (Yanney) Roskens, '84, and grandchildren Charles Roskens, x'18, and Mary Roskens, x'21.

James Warren, D. October 15, 2023

survived by wife Dian (Jones) Warren, '56, and step-children Scott Moore, '84, Andy Moore, '89, and his wife Shelby (Wells) Moore, '88, and step-grandchild Sarah Moore, x'13.

Syed Mohiuddin, D. November 20, 2023

survived by children Sameena (Mohiuddin) Noetzel, '81, Rashid Mohiuddin, '86, and Kulsoom "Coco" Mohiuddin, '88.

NEWS

Nick Thielen, '01, has been named General Counsel at Lozier Corporation.

Marcus Soori, '00, is working on a startup to bring the first tricorder to market, and it aims to solve the \$1 trillion "FaceTime call" telehealth problem. This solution will benefit the 40% of Americans (even those with health insurance) who cannot afford to see a doctor, while also bringing efficiency to insurers, hospitals, and providers. For more information visit wefunder.com/od.vision.inc. Marcus is the Founder & CEO of O/D Vision, Inc.

Congratulations to **Jessie (Curry), '14**, and Christopher Worden on the birth of their daughter, Anna Renee, on November 21, 2023.

Grayson Shirey, '21, interned for Congressman Mike McCaul, Chairman, House Committee on Foreign Affairs over the summer. Grayson is a junior at Baylor University majoring in international studies and French. She is a member of the Baylor Model United Nations team, a leader of their International Justice Mission chapter and is employed as a tutor for the athletic department. She is currently studying at St. Andrews University in Scotland.

LET'S CONNECT!

Feeling social? Follow us on Instagram @BrownellTalbotSchool and on Facebook @BrownellTalbotAlumni and @BrownellTalbotSchool

New contact information? Is your mail going to your parents address? It's time to update the school at brownell.edu/hello.

CAMP DISCOVERY

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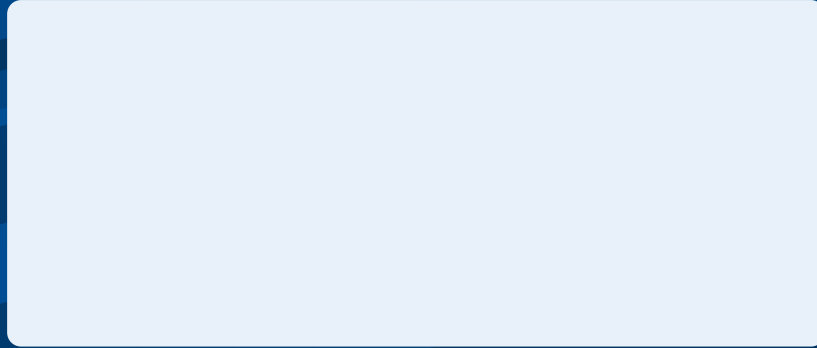


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SAVE THE DATE!

MAR 22-23

Theatre Production of *Our Town*

MAY 10-11

I ♥ BT Gala

MAY 25

Commencement



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